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Bonn/Bad Godesberg, Germany
August 16, 1958

Dear Whitney:

When I went off with General D. on May 30, 1944, hoping to participate in the Normandy invasion, he instructed me to keep a diary, to be given our headquarters after the event. Because of our security regulations I had never previously during my service with OSS kept any such record, except for some vague notes made in connection with the Sicilian landings.

After our return from Normandy, I continued to make diary notes in a desultory fashion until December 1944, when I abandoned the practice completely.

If you undertake a history of the OSS, it could be that some of this material might be useful to you, in which case I shall gladly place it at your disposition. Unfortunately, it is now lodged in Washington, and I cannot get at it until I make a trip home.

In connection with the Normandy episode, Ned Burton had asked me to write him a personal letter about General D's activities, if there were any of a nature I would prefer to leave out of the diary (which might be given considerable circulation within the headquarters staff). I did so, but kept no copy of it, and after the passage of 14 years have little recollection of what it contained.

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However, for your own amusement, I shall now try to set down some of the incidents, as far as I recall them typical of Bill's personality and characteristics displayed during this trip.

When he arrived in London, expecting somehow to be present at the invasion of Normandy, even his customary optimism was dampened by the unanimous decision of the Armed Services not to permit him to be attached to any of their units. His friend, Jim Forrestal, had issued a specific order forbidding him to be allowed transportation on any naval craft.

Bill at once set to work with habitual ingenuity to arrange matters to his liking. I had seen the Forrestal order, but never knew whether he had. At any rate, he took me with him to call on Admiral Stark who occupied a large apartment on Grosvenor Square. He appealed to Stark to be attached in some capacity to a naval unit for the landings. Stark told Bill he was aware that the Army would not allow him to go with any of its contingents, and since Donovan was an Army officer, he, as an Admiral, was not competent to make any such arrangements.

Our General was not daunted. The fine looking, grey haired Admiral was toasting his backside in front of an open fire. Only the three of us were there. Bill literally sprung at him, thrust that football-bent stubby forefinger into his midriff, almost toppling him into the flames and said: "Betty, you and I are old and expendable. We ought to die together on a beach with enemy bullets through our bellies."

Stark did not seem attracted by this pleasant prospect, so we left him, and Bill went to his hotel to brood over some other approach to the problem.

How he accomplished his end I never knew, but anyhow on May 30 we were afloat, passing from ship to ship until we came into snug quarters on the Tuscaloosa, commanded by the General's friend Admiral Davo.

Once the armada got on its way, Bill frequently referred to how interesting it was going to be to get ashore soon after the landings, and check up on what his agents were doing in the immediate vicinity. Davo never warmed to these advances; it was evident, at least to me, that he intended to give the General the full run of the ship but not to involve himself in any of Bill's overland ambitions.

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By June 7, Donovan's restlessness could no longer be curbed. Mayo flatly refused to lend him a boat, but said if he hailed a passerby who would take him aboard he, Mayo supposed he could not prevent it. This was enough for the General, who promptly put on his Congressional Medal ribbon (which I had never before seen him wear) and full battle kit. We climbed down a rope net from which we fell perilously into a launch. Bill posted himself in the bow, and a few minutes later accosted an officer on a Destroyer Escort we were about to pass, and said he wanted to talk to the Captain on urgent business.

Captain Michael was bewildered by tales of secret agents awaiting our arrival beyond the American lines, and ran his DE as close to the beach as seemed feasible. From the deck, Donovan peremptorily summoned an unloaded LCV (Landing Craft Vehicle) to lay alongside. Its sailor, impressed by a romantic account of our intentions, got us near the shore. En route, he and the General exchanged reminiscences about Chicago gangsters. It looked as if we would have to swim the last twenty yards, but Bill shouted orders to a Duck driver, to divert his course, and we mounted its hood, sitting side by side.

As I mentioned in the Diary, the Duck was attacked by machine gun fire from one or more German planes almost as soon as we were on firm ground. The General rolled off the hood into the sand. I followed, fell on him, and gashed his chin with my steel helmet. The Duck had ceased to move. There was another rain of bullets, blood was gushing down the outside of Bill's throat. I was unnecessarily contrite, for he turned to me happily and said, "Now it will be like this all the time."

We left the Duck behind, passed through our lines, and somehow were not stopped until we were halted by the Lieutenant of an American anti-aircraft battery. He asked where we were going, with a respectful eye on the Medal of Honor and the bloody chin and throat. The General diverted the conversation to the Lieutenant's own adventures, and then let him into our secrets by pointing to a few Frenchmen, working in a field, a couple of hundred yards ahead, and saying, "Those are some of my boys and I must interrogate them" The Lieutenant said he thought it was most unsafe to venture out in this open field, but off we went. The Frenchmen did not wait for us and vanished behind a thick hedge. D., with me in his wake, got to the near side of the hedge but lay down when we heard lively machine gun fire not far beyond it.

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I believe it was at this point that D. turned to me as we lay flat and said: "You understand, of course, David, that neither of us must be captured--we know too much." Thinking of how unprotected we were with an automatic apiece, I dutifully answered, "Yes, Sir." In a low voice, he then said: "Have you your pills with you?" At last I understood. Indeed, I had been issued, a long time before, a couple of Stan Lovell's super-poisoned pellets, one of which was to be swallowed if circumstances demanded we were to die rather than reveal. Unfortunately, my pills were not on my person: I had not come ashore expecting to make a hazardous reconnaissance alone with the General. I apologized for my forgetfulness, but Bill forgave me at once and said he would give me one of his. Thereupon, he dug out his wallet and searched through it.

Meanwhile, I was assigned to watch through a hole in the hedge for any sight of the enemy or friends. After a minute or two, D. confessed he must have lost his poison. He remembered having put the pills out on his dressing table at Claridges for transfer to his wallet, and perhaps he had left them there. Solicitous for the health of Claridge's personnel, he told me to wireless as soon as we returned to the ship that any medical supplies left in his room should be gathered carefully together and deposited with the hall porter, Gibbs.

While these arrangements were being made under the hedge, there was quite a lot of noise behind and ahead, on land and in the skies. None of our mythical boys were in sight, so we made a long overdue retreat via such shelter as presented itself.

It was D.'s bad luck, just as we had at last reached safe haven, to run smack into General Bradley, commanding the U.S. First Army, and Major General Royce of the 9th Air Force. There had been some sharp differences of opinion in the past between D. and Royce, and they heartily disliked each other. Bradley, ordinarily amiable, must have known there were strict orders against D. being anywhere near Normandy.

I wondered how our General would handle this one. He saluted politely, addressed Bradley and said: "General, Colonel Bruce and I have just been trying to establish contact with some of our agents. As I have always predicted, it is going to be easy to get intelligence from behind the German lines. I would like to send Bruce to spend some time with the First Army as soon as possible, and I've instructed him to give you all the help he can."

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I was pretty well flabbergasted by this and afraid General Bradley might lose his temper. Instead, he answered: "Bill, I would be very glad to have Bruce at my headquarters later on, but suppose you now go back to wherever you came from"

We made off. D. very elated over thinking he had succeeded, in this odd fashion, in locating an OSS group directly with Bradley. I did not myself place the same interpretation on the interview.

However, Bill was so pleased that when we reached the beach, where it was almost dark, he light-heartedly commandeered the only Duck in sight to come and fetch us. (He told me that perhaps for the sake of discipline I should not recite the correct details in my Diary of how we effected our departure.) The driver of the Duck told D. he had been sent there to wait for General Bradley. D. asked the driver if he knew General Bradley by sight. The answer was no. D. told him Bradley was out there in a field, would not be back for a long time, and meanwhile he and I were on urgent business for the President, and must rejoin our ship at once. How, almost simultaneously, D. established his identity, and claimed he had represented a relative or friend of this Brooklyn conductor in a criminal suit, is beyond me, but we were accepted, and transferred to a cruising LCV, by D. shouting he was charged with an important message for General Eisenhower. That Congressional Medal ribbon certainly helped. The rest was easy; we got back to the DE and from it to the Tuscaloosa, where I almost beat out my brains and broke my legs getting up the swinging net in the dark, as it swung wildly in the choppy sea. The climb didn't faze the General--it sounded like the clatter of garbage cans in Georgetown as he went up.

Another incident that occurred in London involving General Crockett, then G-2, I did not report to Bill Donovan. I was being grilled, at Crockett's instigation before General Devers and a large group of General officers on OSS intelligence activities in ETO. General Devers was very polite, but Crockett was heated and wound up his denunciation of OSS by observing that Donovan was "tricky." In one of those Kilroy appearances, for not even I knew Bill had unexpectedly arrived in London, he had entered the room and

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heard the last part of the denunciation. He walked across to Crockett, stood in front of him, and in an absolutely calm, even voice remarked: "General Devers, I beg your pardon, but unless General Crockett at once withdraws this slur on me and apologizes I shall tear him to pieces and throw what is left of him into Grosvenor Square." Devers called for an apology, which was handsomely made, and the incident was closed. Crockett was, as you know, later fired but not for this reason.

Sincerely yours,

David Bruce
American Ambassador

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October 12, 1963 - Saturday

I was sad to hear of the almost simultaneous deaths in Paris of Edith Piaf and Jean Cocteau. She was a remarkable, but tempestuous woman, who suffered from chronic bad health. She was a great favorite of the French public. If Cocteau had not been so gifted in many fields, he might have been a genius in one of them. He had an extraordinary versatility of talent. He became a friend of ours when we lived in Paris, and his crowning at the French Academy was one of the most spectacular events in the history of that august institution.

We took a morning train to Easton Neston, where we arrived for a late lunch. David McEwen, a pretty girl named Jocelyn, Sir William Williams and his wife, Ali Forbes, Mary and Tony Keswick, and others were spending the weekend there. It was still Indian summer, and the place looked wonderfully. Prince Michel of Greece arrived tonight. He is a young man of unusual attractiveness. He takes seriously his career as a Greek Army Officer.

October 13, 1963 - Sunday

I dawdled while most of the house party went to church, reading books on Mayfair and on Bristol, about which localities I am boning up for forthcoming speeches. There was a great dispersal of guests in the late afternoon, but replacements arrived in the shape of Amabelle and Patrick Lindsay at dinnertime.

October 14, 1963 - Monday

I motored in this morning from the country, and lunched at home, where E was entertaining a varied lot of fashion people. Marie Louise Bousquet has arrived to stay at the house. There were the Duchess of Buccleuch, Princess Hope of Sikkim, Ernestine Carter, Eleanor Lambert, Mrs. Ploydell Bouverie, Mr. and Mrs. Rayne, Mr Harding, Mr. Amies, Mr. Norman Norell, M. Cardin, Baronne Davilliers, and Roy Thomson. This was a gay lot, representing a number of countries.

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Eugene Black came to see me this afternoon. In addition to business affairs, he is here for a reconnaisance of the Shakespeare celebration to take place at Stratford-on-Avon in 1964. The same 400th anniversary will be celebrated at Stratford, Connecticut, where Black will be in charge. He is also doing a special job for the President on supersonic aircraft.

Senator Hartke (Democratic Senator from Indiana) with two of his seven children, his wife, and some followers, came to see me. He is one of the few Democrats elected to high office in Indiana. He does not regard the prospects for the Democratic Party there in the next election with great optimism, since he feels uncertain as to how divisive the Negro problem may be.

At home this evening Bob Meyner, former Governor of New Jersey, his wife, Bob Alcorn, the Inglis-Joneses (formerly Tookie Mortimer Zoppola), Kemp Bartlett and his wife, from Baltimore, Walter and Constance Talmadge Giblin, came for drinks. Walter seems to have made a swift recovery from his recent operation, in which his lung was removed.

We dined at home tonight with Marie Louise Bousquet and Nicky.

October 15, 1963 - Tuesday

I went to the meeting this morning of IMCO, the Inter-Governmental Maritime Consultative Organization, a UN specialized Agency. Tom Beale is head of the US delegation, which includes Admiral Roland, Commandant of the Coast Guard, Ralph B. Dewey, President of the Pacific American Steamship Association, Mr. Alvin Shapiro, Vice President of the American Merchant Marine Institute, Mr. Joseph Lane Kirkland, Executive Assistant to the President, AFL-CIO, and Mr. Carroll Perry, Chief of the Maritime Affairs Division, Department of State.

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There was a lot of office work to attend to, including going over and making additions to an interesting series of biographical sketches on possible choices for the Prime Minister's replacement. Ted Lampson prepared this, and I thought did well. We sent off a telegram as follows:

Afterwards, I realized that I had overlooked saying anything about Hailsham's American ancestry on his mother's side.

E and I went to lunch at the Park Lane Hotel as guests of the Mayfair Association. The Chairman is Mr. R. Henderson-Tate, the representative here of the Timkin Roller Bearing Company. I talked along the following lines:

Joseph Frank of the Ford Motor Company came to see me this afternoon. He has been in Brussels for a week, and is somewhat gloomy over the prospects for increasing Ford Motor exports from their plants in Germany and England.

Larry Collins of NEWSWEEK in Paris flew over today to see me. He is preparing a book on the liberation of Paris, and wished me to help him with the recountal of incidents that came to my attention at that time.

I had an influenza injection this afternoon, which has left me with a swollen arm.

Sidney Gruson called on me. He is going to New York tomorrow for consultation at the office of the New York Times.

E and I went to dinner as guests of Roy Thomson, at the Hilton Hotel, in honor of the winners of the Sunday Times International Fashion Awards. The dinner was fun, and a good many diplomats were there, including the wives of the French and Italian Ambassadors. I sat between Molly Buccleuch and a lady with whom I had a prolonged conversation but whose name and occupation was never divulged to me.